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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/822,470	03/28/2001	Durand R. Begault	ARC-14556-1	8981
25186	7590	02/16/2005	EXAMINER	
NASA AMES RESEARCH CENTER ATTN: PATENT COUNSEL MAIL STOP 202A-4 MOFFETT FIELD, CA 94035-1000				PENDLETON, BRIAN T
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
		2644		

DATE MAILED: 02/16/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/822,470	BEGAULT, DURAND R.	
Examiner	Art Unit		
Brian T. Pendleton	2644		

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 March 2001.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-46 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) Claim(s) 1-46 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date .

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-6 and 28-31, drawn to a system and method for distinguishing an auditory alert signal from a background of one or more other auditory signals, classified in class 381, subclass 98.
- II. Claims 6-14 and 32-40, drawn to a system and method for distinguishing an auditory alert signal from a background of one or more other auditory signals, classified in class 381, subclass 17.
- III. Claims 15 and 41, drawn to a system and method of distinguishing an auditory alert signal, classified in class 381, subclass 56.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions III and (I or II) are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination (group III) as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the combination has a function of balancing the sounds heard at the ears of an user, such as in a stereo system while providing another sound in the user's head, such as background noise which is useful for noise cancellation. The subcombination (either groups I or II) has separate utility such as improving the user's awareness

of an information signal through signal processing manipulation which is useful in computer applications, audio signals in cinema, etc. The specific signal processing (which is recited in the dependent claims of group III) of the additional sound signal in group III is not essential to determination of the claim's patentability and acts as evidence that the combination does not rely upon the specifics of the subcombination for its patentability.

Inventions I and II are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct from each other if they are shown to be separately usable. In the instant case, invention II has separate utility such as localizing a sound source which can be used in visual applications such as computer game environments or movies. For example, the method of invention II can be used to synchronize the apparent location of a sound source with the movement of a visual character across a screen. Invention I cannot be used for the same purpose. See MPEP § 806.05(d).

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian T. Pendleton whose telephone number is (703) 305-9509. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tran Sinh can be reached on (703) 305-4040. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Brian T. Pendleton
Examiner
Art Unit 2644

